



Substitute House Bill No. 7407

Public Act No. 07-216

AN ACT CONCERNING THE RIGHTS OF INMATES WITH MENTAL ILLNESS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2007*) (a) When assessing and subsequently providing mental health services to any inmate confined in a correctional facility of the Department of Correction who has been diagnosed with a mental illness by a psychiatrist licensed pursuant to chapter 370 of the general statutes, and such psychiatrist has informed the department that such inmate is currently diagnosed by such psychiatrist to be a danger to himself or herself or others, the department shall consider the diagnosis of such psychiatrist in order to appropriately assess such inmate and provide individualized, clinically appropriate and culturally competent mental health services to treat such inmate's condition.

(b) (1) The Department of Correction shall, within available appropriations, develop a program for custodial staff members to receive not less than four hours and not more than eight hours of training on mental health issues each year. Such training shall consist of classroom instruction and written materials provided by a qualified mental health professional in conjunction with a training academy accredited by the American Correctional Association, and shall

Substitute House Bill No. 7407

include, at a minimum: (A) Prevention of suicide and self-injury; (B) recognition of signs of mental illness; (C) communication skills for interacting with inmates with mental illness; and (D) alternatives to disciplinary action and the use of force when dealing with inmates with mental illness. Such program shall be offered: (i) Commencing on July 1, 2009, to all custodial staff members at one or more correctional facilities designated by the Commissioner of Correction; (ii) on and after July 1, 2010, to all custodial staff members at one or more additional correctional facilities designated by the commissioner; and (iii) on and after July 1, 2011, to all custodial staff members at one or more additional correctional facilities designated by the commissioner. Such program shall terminate on July 1, 2012.

(2) In addition to the requirements of subdivision (1) of this subsection, all custodial staff members at each correctional facility of the Department of Correction in which female inmates are confined may, during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008, and within available appropriations, receive not less than four hours and not more than eight hours of training on mental health issues, including gender specific and trauma related mental health issues faced by female inmates.

(c) Before the planned release of any inmate diagnosed with a mental illness as provided in subsection (a) of this section from a correctional facility, the Department of Correction shall collaborate with the Judicial Department, the Department of Social Services and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, as deemed necessary and within available appropriations, to assist such inmate in obtaining housing, mental health treatment services, any public benefits for which the inmate is eligible and employment counseling upon the inmate's release.

(d) On February first of each year, the Commissioner of Correction shall submit a report to the joint standing committees of the General

Substitute House Bill No. 7407

Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the judiciary, public health and appropriations and the budgets of state agencies, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes. Such report shall set forth (1) the number of inmates who have been determined to require mental health services during the previous calendar year, and (2) a description of program services provided by the Department of Correction and, if applicable, its contracted health services provider.

Approved July 6, 2007